



# CHOICE BASED CREDIT SYSTEM (CBCS) IN HIGHER EDUCATION: A STUDY ABOUT THE ATTITUDE OF THE STUDENTS OF UNDERGRADUATE LEVEL OF DIBRUGARH UNIVERSITY

Papori Handique<sup>1</sup>, Sikhasmita Hazarika<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Assistant Professor, Doomdooa College

<sup>2</sup> Assistant Professor, Doomdooa College

## INTRODUCTION

Society is constantly changing. Under this change, everything within society is changing. Education is no exception. India's higher education system is considered to be the most challenging in terms of access, equity and relevance, reorientation of programmes by laying emphasis on quality, values and ethics together with the assessment of institutions for their accreditation. The institutions of higher education are in need of infusion of new models in order to keep the curriculum in pace with changing environment which include technology adoption, changing industry requirement, changing aspiration of students and changing expectations of society. Subject to the change of society, education achieves the desired changes in its goals, curriculum, environment, system, and so on. Thus the University Grants Commission (UGC) has initiated several steps to include innovation and improvement in course- curricula, introduction various types of examination, evaluation & assessment system. With a view to allow the flexibility in education system, so that students depending upon their interests and aims can choose interdisciplinary and skill-based courses, choice based credit system (CBCS), is adopted.

The choice based credit system not only offers opportunities to learn core subjects but also opportunities discipline unrelated subject and explore additional avenues of learning beyond the core subjects for holistic development CBCS is essential for Higher Education as this system increases the sincerity among the students as they are preferring to learn the subjects of their choice. University Grants Commission has come up with the Choice Based Credit System (CBCS), a programme in which the students while choosing the prescribed course, which is the core, can opt for any elective or minor or soft skill courses and the entire assessment is graded, based on a credit system. The CBCS provides choice for students to select the elective components in any other institution as well. The main objectives of introducing such programs by UGC are: Need for reforms in higher education; advanced learning opportunities; ability to match students' scholastic and non-scholastic needs and aspirations; inter-institution transferability of students; partial completion of an academic program in the institution of enrolment and partial completion in a specialized institution, improvement in academic quality and excellence; greater flexibility to successfully complete the course; standardization and comparability of educational programs across the globe. According to UGC guidelines, within the new system, there is a shift focused from teacher-centred education to learner-centred education. Emphasis is on learning and not on teaching, with the learner being at the centre stage of all academic transactions.

A credit system for higher education measures different parameters like –

- Student performance
- Learning outcomes
- Entrepreneurship skills
- Contact hours
- Innovation
- Creativity & talent

The main features of Choice Based Credit System (CBCS) can be summarized as follows:

- Under the Choice Based Credit System (CBCS), the student has an option to choose inter/multi-disciplinary courses.
- Choice Based Credit System (CBCS) aims to bridge the gap between the two students of various courses as it has a provision of offering core subjects with the addition of different soft courses. It means students have an opportunity to pursue core subjects as well as soft courses of other department simultaneously.
- The credit system allows a student to study what he prefers in his own sequence as per his interests. Choice Based Credit System (CBCS) provides students with greater flexibility in the choice of courses and a greater scope to enhance their skills by taking up projects and assignments and vocational training.
- Students can choose courses at basic or advanced level. Highly motivated students get the chance to gain extra credits by opting for additional courses under this system.

- Choice Based Credit System (CBCS) offers a student, the flexibility to transfer the credits to a different branch of study, in case he/she wishes to change his branch of study.
- Choice Based Credit System (CBCS) is a step towards moving away from numerical marking to grading which minimizes the stigma of failure among students. The credit based grading system is considered desirable because it facilitates student mobility across institutions within the country and across other countries.

## Key benefits of CBCS

The CBCS system bridges the gap between professional and social exposure in addition to providing a thorough education. The student may opt for interdisciplinary or cross-disciplinary courses. According to each student's IQ level, a mentor would help students choose their courses which would support research, community engagement, and collaboration. The main benefit of CBCS is the walk-in/walk-out certification programme offered by CBCS, which gives students more freedom to select the courses they want to study while simultaneously providing options for certification. Students are extremely motivated to gain more credits and have the option of enrolling in basic or advanced courses at their own speed. Credits may be transferred with CBCS if a student changes their area of study. The move from numerical marking to grading includes the use of CBCS. Grading lessens the stigma of "failure," and credit-based grading is regarded as preferable because it encourages student mobility across institutions inside the country and abroad.

## Key benefits of CBCS to faculty:

The advantages of CBCS for faculty members are outlined in the list below.

### 1. Flexibility in Curriculum Design

In contrast to the traditional educational system, the CBCS method offers teachers a novel option to build and prepare the whole syllabus and curriculum at their convenience. However, they must make sure that their curriculum complies with the UGC's criteria.

### 2. Establish the criteria for the evaluation.

The credits awarded for passing a course are up to the teachers' discretion. The credits will be made up of the following: Classroom ©, Experimental (E), and the results of the written or theoretical test (T).

### 3. Enhanced Process of Teaching and Learning

Teachers now have the option to implement new teaching techniques that will aid the new generation of students in learning more effectively and precisely as a result of the curriculum revisions. The integration of the Choice-Based Credit System (CBCS) with the Student Information System (SIS) and Learning Management System (LMS) may make it easier for teachers to plan quizzes, seminars, and other learning opportunities on a bigger scale.

### 4. Less Assessment Burden on Teachers

Teachers don't need to worry about assessment because the credit system has replaced the old grade system and evaluation criteria are defined up front when students choose their courses. Automatic evaluation is carried out as the student gets credits with the aid of the LMS and SIS. Everything is based on the student's level of advancement. In a nutshell, the CBCS system has enormous potential for completely reshaping India! Educators might choose to support school software like LMS and SIS with a Choice-based credit system integrated to increase its benefits. It may simplify every aspect of schoolwork, including assisting students in enrolling in courses, developing curricula, and calculating credits and assessment scores.

## The overall advantages and disadvantages of Choice Based Credit System:

### Advantages of CBCS System

- Students have the opportunity to choose courses of their own choice and interest
- The Credit System allows students to study at their own phase as per

their interests

- Students can enroll in additional courses in their own interest to earn more credits
- Students moving from an old to a new college/ university can transfer the credits to the new migrating institution
- The Choice Based Credit System allows students to pursue one part of the course in one institution and the remaining in the other. The standard CBCS assessment method makes the evaluation of the performance of students easy on a single scale
- The guidelines for the System are set by the UGC commission of India
- The System improves the job opportunities for students
- The System is applicable to all central, state, and recognized colleges/ universities in the country

#### Disadvantages of CBCS System

- Lacks accurate estimation of marks
- Increases workload for professors and lecturers
- Since no two students have the same timetable, this creates confusion among the students

The CBCS uses a grading and evaluation system to map student performance rather than assigning grades in terms of percentages. It adheres to a credit system that is connected to the course materials made available to students. This not only creates possibilities for learning but also makes learning goals and objectives evident.

Thus, the present paper aims to highlight the analytical study of Choice-Based Credit System.

#### OBJECTIVES: The following are the objectives of this study:

1. To find the difference in attitude of the male and female undergraduate students of Dibrugarh university towards CBCS.
2. To find out difference in the attitude of the male and female undergraduate students of Dibrugarh University towards grading system.
3. To study the impact of CBCS in academic achievement of the undergraduate students of Dibrugarh University.
4. To study the problems of CBCS system in view of the undergraduate students of Dibrugarh University.

#### RESEARCH QUESTIONS: The following are the research questions of this study-

1. Does the attitude of the male and female undergraduate students of Dibrugarh university is different towards CBCS?
2. Does the attitude of the male and female undergraduate students of Dibrugarh University is different towards grading system?
3. Does CBCS have any impact in academic achievement of the undergraduate students of Dibrugarh University?
4. Does the undergraduate students of Dibrugarh University faces problems in CBCS system?

#### DELIMITATION: The recent study is delimited to the following:

1. The study is confined to the students of graduation only.
2. The study is delimited to 250 students of Degree colleges of Dibrugarh University only.
3. The Colleges were selected purposively.
4. The study is delimited to arts and science stream only.

**Method:** This research used a descriptive survey method.

#### Population:

The population of the study comprises of all the students studying in the degree colleges under Dibrugarh University, Assam.

#### Sample:

The present investigation aims to study the attitude of under graduate students towards choice based credit system. For this purpose a total sample of 300, where 200 from Arts and 100 from Science were selected on the basis of random sampling method. The 200 Arts students comprises of 55 girls and 45 boys students whereas 100 Science students comprises of 50 girls and 50 boys students of undergraduate level of Dibrugarh University.

Arts Stream (200)		Science (100)	
Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys
125	75	50	50

Table:1-table of sample

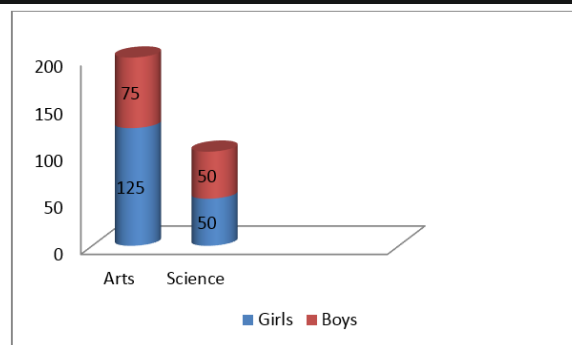


Fig:1- Size of the sample

#### Tool used:

The purpose of the present investigation was to judge the attitude of under graduate students of Dibrugarh University towards choice based credit system. Data was collected through questionnaire that included both closed ended and open ended questions. The questionnaire included total 30 items.

#### Review of related literature:

**ANALYSIS OF THE DATA:** The mass of data collected through the administration of tool on the selected sample has no meaning unless it is arranged, analyzed and interpreted for drawing conclusions and valid generalizations. How over valid, reliable and adequate data may be, it does not serve any purpose, till the time it is carefully and systematically classified, tabulated, scientifically analyzed, intelligently interpreted and rationally concluded. Keeping in view the objectives the data obtained from the sample were analyzed both qualitative and quantitatively. Tables were generated from the Questionnaires, so that the essence of the interpreted information obtained can be presented systematically.

**Objective 1:** To find the difference in attitude of the male and female undergraduate students of Dibrugarh university towards CBCS.

Arts stream					Science stream				
Sam	N	Attitude towards CBCS			Sam	N	Attitude towards CBCS		
ple		Positive	Negative	No response			Positive	Negative	No response
Boy	75	40(53.33 %)	35(46.7 %)	nil	Boy	50	33(66.00 %)	17(34.00 %)	Nil
Girl	125	80(64.00 %)	45(36.00 %)	nil	Girl	50	42(84.00 %)	08(16.00 %)	Nil

Table 1: Attitude of male and female undergraduate students from both Arts and Science stream of Dibrugarh University towards CBCS.

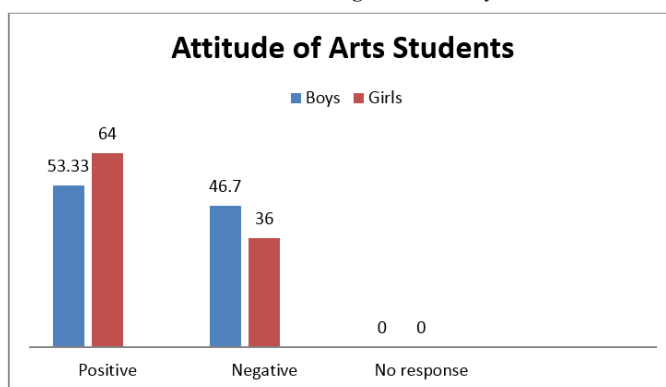
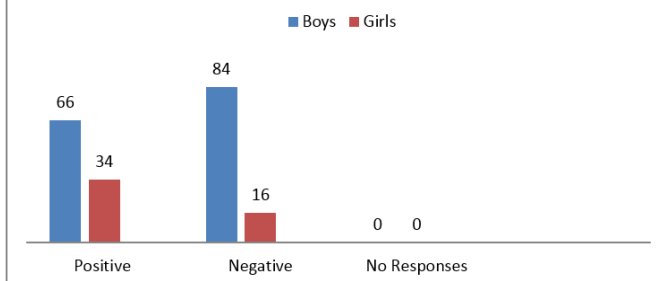


Fig 2: Attitude of male and female undergraduate students from Arts stream of Dibrugarh University towards CBCS.

### Attitude of Science stream



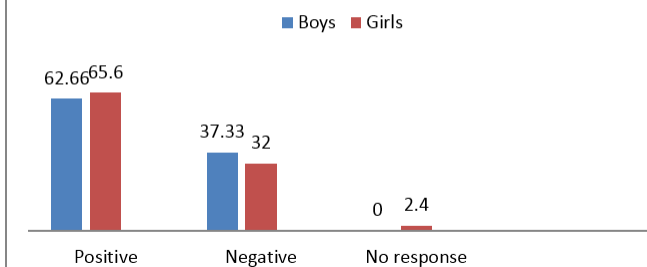
**Fig 3: Attitude of male and female undergraduate students from Science stream of Dibrugarh University towards CBCS**

Objective 2: To find out difference in the attitude of the male and female undergraduate students of Dibrugarh University towards grading system.

Arts stream					Science stream				
Sam ple	N	Attitude system	towards	grading	Sam ple	N	Attitude system	towards	grading
		Positive	Negative	No response			Positive	Negative	No response
Boy	75	47(62.6 6%)	28(37.33 %)	Nil	Boy	50	33(66.0 0%)	17(34.00 %)	Nil
Girl	125	82(65.6 %)	40(32.00 %)	03(2.4%)	Girl	50	40(80.0 0%)	10(20.00 %)	Nil

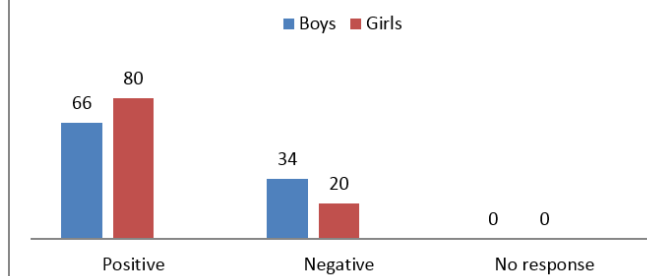
Objective 3: To study the impact of CBCS in academic achievement of the undergraduate students of Dibrugarh University.

### Attitude of Arts students



**Fig 4: Attitude of the male and female undergraduate students from Arts stream of Dibrugarh University towards grading system.**

### Attitude of science students



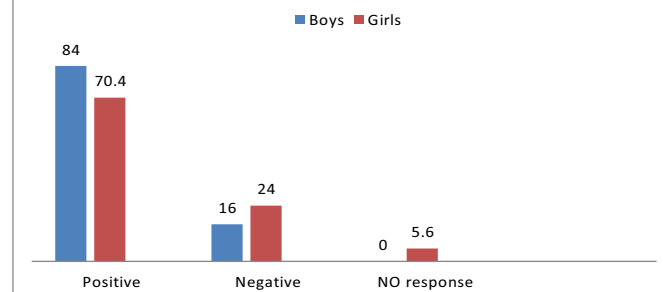
**Fig 5: Attitude of the male and female undergraduate students from Science stream of Dibrugarh University towards grading system.**

Objective 3: To study the impact of CBCS in academic achievement of the undergraduate students of Dibrugarh University.

Arts stream				Science stream			
Sam	N	Impact of CBCS		Sam	N	Impact of CBCS	
ple		Positive	Negative	ple		Positive	Negative
			No response				No response

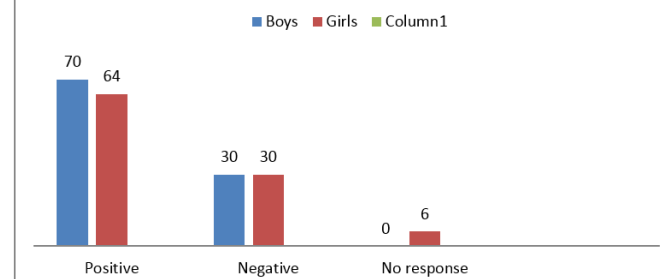
Boy	75	63(84.00%)	12(16.00%)	nil	Boy	50	35(70.00%)	15(30.00%)	Nil
Girl	125	88(70.4%)	30(24.00%)	7(5.6%)	Girl	50	32(64.00%)	15(30.00%)	02(6.00%)

### Responses of arts students



**Fig 6: The impact of CBCS in academic achievement of the undergraduate students of Arts stream of Dibrugarh University**

### Responses of Science students



**Fig 7: The impact of CBCS in academic achievement of the undergraduate students of Science stream of Dibrugarh University.**

Objective 4: To study the problems of CBCS system in view of the undergraduate students of Dibrugarh University

In response to this question following responses has been drawn

1. Diversion from the main course: There is apprehension that Ability Enhancement Compulsory Courses and Skill Enhancement Courses will get little attention from teachers and students and will remain as mere formality.
2. Lack of adequate infrastructure: CBCS encourages teaching through projects, Hobbies & Case studies. There is a lack of resources-Human as well as Physical /infrastructure for imparting training in projects & hobbies. A majority of colleges and departments in universities do not have adequate infrastructure to facilitate this, including smart boards, projectors, access to computers and Internet, and storage space for projects. It will call to increase the infrastructure to the house or accommodate the students' needs.
3. Difficulties with Grading System: Accepting grade points in the subject instead of marks and letter grades instead of exact total marks is difficult since the determination of individual ranking is not possible by merely referring to grade points and letter grades. Moreover, Grading System has its own limitations.
4. Lack of Academic advising: There is a cafeteria of choices but how do you know which combination works best? Students may face a dilemma in choosing the subjects due to their inexperience in predicting future demand. Most of the faculty members are unable to advise students on the credits to choose from out of available options.
5. Chances of subjectivity in Evaluation: Seriousness of students will get reduced from the examination as much weightage is given to continuous or internal assessment and evaluation. The chance of subjectivity would be maximum, as internal evaluation has 40 % weightage.
6. Problematic transfer of students: Mobility or transferring of students from one institution to another would lead to many new problems like wastage of time, effort. It is also non economic in nature
7. Lack of text books: Text books are student's best guide for any course. It helps both the teachers and the students in curriculum transaction. Lack of effective textbooks leads the students to nowhere.
8. Defective time schedule: To complete a wide syllabus within a time period of 6 months gets difficult for the students. Moreover, various

- unpredictable holidays due to natural calamities, strike, unavoidable situations in the district or state makes it impossible to complete the syllabus. Along with this, project works, practical, sessional examinations makes it difficult for the students to achieve their predetermined goals.
9. Overloaded curriculum: The overloaded curriculum in the semester system which comprises of various projects, research, practical work, etc. impacts the academic achievement of learners. It also disturbs their mental well-being which leads to various psychological issues, like- anxiety, depression, exam phobia, etc.
  10. Traditional method of teaching: Teaching methods impacts greatly in the teaching- learning process. Although various changes were made in the curriculum for undergraduate students, the method of teaching remains the same. The same lecture method makes understanding the content dull and boring which directly or indirectly lessens the interest and attention of the learners.
  11. Lack of seriousness in study: 6 semesters in three years which comprises of 6 final examinations and 2 sessional examinations in each semester makes the students to be more casual towards examination and decreases their seriousness towards their study.

**MAJOR FINDING AND CONCLUSION:** A semester system is an academic term. It divides the academic year into two sessions. Usually semester means six-month period. Semester system also might be applicable in the schools and universities. In semester system each academic year is divided into equal parts of about six months each semester- I and II semester. So, a semester is a period of six months during which teaching work is conducted. After the end of the teaching work of the six months, examinations are held in this system examinations are held half-yearly instead of yearly. The semester system accelerates the teaching-learning process and enables vertical and horizontal mobility in learning. The credit based semester system provides flexibility in designing curriculum and assigning credits based on the course content and hours of teaching. The choice based credit system provides a 'cafeteria' type approach in which the students can take courses of their choice, learn at their own pace, undergo additional courses and acquire more than the required credits, and adopt an interdisciplinary approach to learning. In spite of many advantages, there are some disadvantages of Choice Based Credit System. Grading system in CBCS results in difficulty to measure or calculate the exact marks. Teachers would suffer with increase in work load, it would affect the regular teaching. CBCS is students' friendly, but system is still under reformatory process.

**The major findings:** following are the major findings of this study-

1. The attitude of the female students of arts stream is more favorable than the attitude of male students towards CBCS.
2. The attitude of the female students of science stream is again more favorable than the attitude of male students towards CBCS.
3. The attitude of the both male and female students of arts stream is positive towards grading system. Only few students mentioned that they are no very much clear about the grading system.
4. The attitude of the both male and female students of science stream is positive towards grading system.
5. All the students responded that CBCS has positive impact on their academic achievement. Only few female students from both the science and arts stream mentioned that there is no any distinct impact on their academic achievement.
6. The students faced many problem in CBCS like-
7. Diversion from the main course: There is apprehension that Ability Enhancement Compulsory Courses and Skill Enhancement Courses will get little attention from teachers and students and will remain as mere formality.
8. Lack of adequate infrastructure: CBCS encourages teaching through projects, Hobbies & Case studies. There is a lack of resources- Human as well as Physical /infrastructure for imparting training in projects & hobbies. A majority of colleges and departments in universities do not have adequate infrastructure to facilitate this, including smart boards, projectors, access to computers and Internet, and storage space for projects. It will call to increase the infrastructure to the house or accommodate the students' needs.
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13. Lack of text books: Text books are student's best guide for any course. It helps both the teachers and the students in curriculum transaction. Lack of effective textbooks leads the students to nowhere.
14. Defective time schedule: To complete a wide syllabus within a time period of 6 months gets difficult for the students. Moreover, various unpredictable holidays due to natural calamities, strike, unavoidable situations in the district or state makes it impossible to complete the syllabus. Along with this, project works, practical, sessional examinations makes it difficult for the students to achieve their predetermined goals.
15. Overloaded curriculum: The overloaded curriculum in the semester system which comprises of various projects, research, practical work, etc. impacts the academic achievement of learners. It also disturbs their mental well-being which leads to various psychological issues, like- anxiety, depression, exam phobia, etc.
16. Traditional method of teaching: Teaching methods impacts greatly in the teaching- learning process. Although various changes were made in the curriculum for undergraduate students, the method of teaching remains the same. The same lecture method makes understanding the content dull and boring which directly or indirectly lessens the interest and attention of the learners.
17. Lack of seriousness in study: 6 semesters in three years which comprises of 6 final examinations and 2 sessional examinations in each semester makes the students to be more casual towards examination and decreases their seriousness towards their study.

**CONCLUSION:** The education plays enormously significant role in building of a nation. There are quite a large number of educational institutions, engaged in imparting education in our country. Majority of them have entered recently into semester system to match with international educational pattern. However, our present education system produces young minds lacking knowledge, confidence, values and skills. It could be because of complete lack of relationship between education, employment and skill development in conventional education system. The present alarming situation necessitates transformation and/or redesigning of education system. The choice based credit system not only offers opportunities and avenues to learn core subjects but also exploring additional avenues of learning beyond the core subjects for holistic development of an individual. The CBCS has more advantages than disadvantages.

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